

# Two Tree Stories

## Tree Story #1

Ruth and I purchased the land for our home from Joe and Mimi Myers thirty years ago. The land was heavily wooded and sloped down to East Twin Lake. There was a ravine on the West side that made our property even more beautiful. As the house was being constructed, it was necessary to remove several trees in the front yard for the driveway, sewage and electrical lines. Mr. Myers, who had a farm nearby, said that he would give us three trees from his tree nursery for our front yard, if we would pay for the expense of relocating the trees. We accepted his offer and decided to wait until Fall to select the trees so we would know the exact color of the leaves.

When Fall arrived, Ruth and I drove our ATV to his farm, less than a mile away, and spent several hours one evening selecting the perfect trees. We selected a pink maple, a yellow maple and a bright red maple. We put a stake by each tree with our name on it and wrapped a bright yellow ribbon around each trunk. We made a map of the nursery and located “our” trees on the map and included a description, e.g., maple tree, second row from road, fourth tree to the north. With this information in hand, we waited for the Spring to have the trees moved.

When Spring arrived, I contacted Davey Tree Company and met with a supervisor assigned to me. I showed him the map, the description and explained that each tree was marked with a ribbon and stake...and that we had revisited the nursery and that the ribbons and stakes were still in place. Our contact person said they would move the trees within the next several weeks. Ruth

and I were very excited and marked the location where the new trees were to be planted. We waited.

One evening, as I was returning from work, I saw that the Davey Tree Company truck in our front yard and the three new trees already planted. Everything looked perfect! I walked over to the supervisor and said, "They look great, did you have any trouble finding them?" The supervisor said, "No, we just picked the first three by the gate." Ouch! All of our planning down the drain. The supervisor said he had never received a map and the trees he picked would be perfect for our yard. Ruth and I decided not to make an issue about this error and instead decided to wait to see what fate had brought us.

The trees turned out to be nothing special, but they have been healthy and are now over fifty feet high and more than thirty years old.... with yellowish leaves. The perfect trees are still in the nursery and are still beautiful. We removed the ribbons and stakes after an evening visit several years after our trees were planted... and held a brief funeral-like service on their behalf. Ruth and I are people who plan...but the "best laid plans...." The remainder of our home construction project turned AS PLANNED.

October 2015 (Thirty year anniversary of the tree selection)

## Tree Story #2

About fifteen years ago I wanted to add a tree to the west end of one of my flower beds which was located near the lake. I thought that would fill this rather large area...which was open space at the time. Our local extension office was having a tree sale and I sought their advice regarding which tree my be the best for this area of our yard. They suggested an AusTree, a variation in the

Willow family. I was told that this was a fast growing tree and would fill that particular area of my yard in quick order. I planted the sapling in the Fall and basically forgot about it. The next Spring, while weeding that particular flower bed, I accidentally pulled the tree out and threw it in the compost pile. That evening, I remembered that I had planted that tree the Fall before and rescued it the next morning...and replanted it. The tree sprung from the ground as promised (the extension advisor said it would grow about seven feet per year), and before long had developed into a three trunked tree. When the tree was about five years old, I started to regret planting it and it was already thirty-five feet tall! I started trimming the lower limbs so our view of the lake would not be impeded...and this tree kept growing and growing. I learned, much too late, that Willow trees are pretty, but messy...with messy being the operative word. Because the tree, which we now called Boris (as in Karlof) provided so much shade, my flower bed had to be changed to wild flowers and shade flowers...as Boris blotted out the sun in that area. It soon became too shady for even shade flowers!

Finally, after fifteen years, we decided to have Boris removed. The triple-trunked tree had now grown to a one hundred foot tree with each trunk measuring more than twenty inches. (Note: Seven feet per year for fifteen years is one hundred and five feet, so the extension advisor gave me very accurate information!)

When the tree removal expert arrived to give me a cost estimate for the removal of the tree and the subsequent stump grinding, I was afraid that I might have to mortgage our home to pay for Boris' funeral. With three helpers, a treaded Bobcat and a large truck at the top of the hill, this team removed Boris in one afternoon, at a cost of \$1200...a bargain I believe.

Don't be fooled by \$5.00 fast growing Willow trees...they are no bargain and you may regret planting one, unless you live by a river in a remote part of the world...and need shade.

